

A
RELATION
OF THE FEARE
FVLL ESTATE OF
Francis Spira, in the
years, 1548.

*The backslider in heart shall be filled with his
owne waies, PROV. 14. 14.*



LONDON,
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Lyon in *Pau's Church-yard*.

1638.

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A Preface.

FOR truth of this History ensuing, besides circumstances of place, person, time, occasion, so exactly observed; I referre my selfe to the Relation of those Godly men, who in severall languages have manifested to the world the severall passages thereof: and although I am not ignorant, that at the first they were not only not credited, but also discredited and slandered, by such as found them to bee a Blur to the Romane Profession, yet they lost not their lustre thereby, but being acquitted by many Compurgators of severall Nations, and some of the Romish Religion, being all of them spectators of this Tragedie. It oc-

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caſioned not only a further manifeſtation and confirmation of the truth, but alſo a large & more frequent confluence, to ſee that which they had formerly only heard of. This partly appeareth out of the ſucceeding Story; but more fully out of an Apology written by Vergerius Biſhop of Iuſtinople, who was accuſed for diſperſing the ſame of this Example to the ſtaine of Popery, in which Apology to N. Rottan, Suffragen of Padua, is ſhortly and plainly declared, what was ſaid, what was done, and who were preſent. If that it be demanded, what mooved mee to compile this Treatiſe; Spira--tell them that it ſhould teach feare and reverence, and indeed among all thoſe that come to ſee him, few or none returns unſhaken. Vergerius in his firſt Epiſtle ſaith; I would faine goe ſee him again, but I exceedingly feare

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feare and tremble, and in his *A*.
pologie saith, it is such a rare ex-
ample, as I would willingly goe to
the furthest parts of the world to
heare or see the like. The Lady
Iane to her Fathers Chaplaine
(that had falne into Spira's sinne)
saith, remember the lamentable e-
state of Spira. I acknowledge that
there hath beene formerly a Booke
published in our Mother tongue,
concerning this subject, but as farre
as I can learne (for I could never
yet obtaine to see any one of them)
it was nothing so large and various
as this present Treatise, and as I
have heard, a translation of onely
one of the Tractates, from whence I
have gathered this present Dis-
course in part. Concerning my care
and fidelitie in this businesse, it is
such as I may truly say without
changing of colour, that there is not
one sentence of all this Worke attri-
A 3 *buted*

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buted unto the person of Spira, but it hath it warrant, either from the Epistles of Vergerius and Gribaldus, Professours of the Law in Padua, or from the Discourses of Henry Scringer a Scottish man, Sigismund Gelons a Transilvanian, and Martin Bocha a Divine of Basill: neither have I taken any other Libertie then as a Relation to weave the aforesaid Discourses one within another, so as those which under severall Writers, were before counted severall, are now by my indeavours reduced into one intire History, connexed by due succession of time and occasion, as punctually as could be aimed at, by the circumstances noted in the Writings of those holy and learned men before named.

N. B.

*April. 5.
1638,*

*Imprimatur
Tho: Wykes.*



A
RELATION OF
the fearefull estate of
FRANCIS SPIRA.

IN the yeare 1548.
when the glorious
Sunne of the
Gospel was but newly ri-
sen in *Europe*; in the daies
of the raigne of *Edward*
the Sixth of that name
King of *England*: In the
Territory, and under the
Iurisdiction of the Citie
of *Venice*, being the very
border of *Italy*, in the

A 4 towne

towne of *Cittadella*, lived
one *Francis Spira*, a Ci-
vill Lawyer, an Advocate
of great rank and esteeme,
being of knowne learn-
ing, & eloquence; of great
experience; of carriage
circumspect and severe;
his speech grave & com-
posed, his countenance
sharpe and austere; every
way befitting that autho-
ritie whereunto hee was
advanced; endowed vvith
outward blessings, of
wife, & eleven children,
& wealth in abundance:
what his worst parts
were, I have no other
war-

Francis Spira.

warrant, then his owne words, which (if not tainted overmuch, with the bitterneſſe of a desperate mind, and bearing the countenance rather of paſſion, then of ſober confeſſion) may ſeeme to adde a period to all further commendations.

I was (ſaid hee) exceſſively covetous of money, and accordingly I applyed my ſelfe to get by injuſtice, corrupting juſtice by deceit, inventing tricks to delude juſtice : good cauſes I either defended deceitfully, or ſold them to the adverſary perſi-

A 5 diouſly;

4
A Relation of

dioufly; it causes I maintained with all my might; I wittingly opposed the known truth, and the trust committed unto me, I either betrayed or perverted. Thus having worn out forty foure yeares, or there abouts, and the news of the new, or rather newly revived opinions of Luther coming into those parts, represented an object of noveltie unto him; who being as desirous to know as hee was famous for knowledge; suffered not these wandring opinions to passe unexamined, but search-

searching into the Scriptures, and into all bookes of Controversie that hee could get, both old and new; and finding more then fame or opinion, he began to taste their nature so well, as he entertaines, loves, and ownes them at length; and with such zeale, as he became a professor; yea a teacher of them, first to his wife, children, and family, and after to his friends, and familiar acquaintance; & in comparison, seemed to neglect all other affaires; intending ever to presse
this

this maine point, that *I*ve
must wholly, and only to de-
pend on the free, and un-
changeable love of God in
the death of Christ, as the
only sure way to salvation :
and this was the summe
of all his discourse, and
this continued for the
space of sixe yeares, or
thereabouts; even so long
as this fire could keepe it
selfe within private wals;
but at length it brake
forth into publique mee-
tings; so as the whole
Province of *Padua* daw-
ned by the lustre thereof.
The Clergie finding the
trade

trade of their pardons to decay; and their Purgatory to waxe cold, began to bestirre themselves; glosing their actions first with calumnious aspersions upon the whole profession, then more plainly striking at *Spira* with grievous accusatiōs: And to effect their purpose, some promise labour, others favour, some advice, others maintenance; all joyned to divide, either his soule from his body, or both from God.

Now was *Iohn Casa* the Popes Legate resident
at

at *Venice*, being by birth a *Florentine*; and one that wanted neither malice against those of this way, nor craftines to effect his malicious purposes: To him these men repaire with outcries against *Spira*; that hee was the man that cōdemned the received rites of the Church; deluded the Ecclesiasticall power, and scandalized the policie thereof; one of no meane ranke; being a man of Account and authoritie, and thereunto, learned in the Scriptures, elegant in speech; and in
one

one word, a dangerous *Lutheran*; having also many disciples, and therefore not to be despised.

At this began the Legate to cast his eye on the terrible alteration that lately had hapned in *Germanie*; where, by the means of one onely *Luther*, the Romish Religion had suffered such a blow, as that it could neither bee cured by dissimulation, nor defended by power; but the Clergie must either mend their manners, or lose their dignities: on the other side,

side, when hee saw how propense the common people inhabiting in the bordering countries of *Italy* vvere to entertaine those new opinions, hee now thought it no time to dispute, or perswade, but with speed repaires to the *Senate*, and procures authoritie from them to send for *Spira*.

Spira by this time had considered vvith himselfe of the nature of his carriage, how evident and notorious it vvas, and therefore subject to bee envied by such, as neither
liked

liked his person nor Religion, hee perceived that his opinions were neither retyred nor speculative, but such as aymed at the overthrow of the *Romish* Faction, and at change of Policie, vvherein at the best, he could expect but a bloudy victory, and that his enemies vvanted neither povver nor occasion to call him to account in publique, vvhen he must either Apostatize, and shamefully give his former life, yea his ovvn conscience the lye, or endure the

the utmost malice of his deadly enemies, or forsake his wife, children, friends, goods, authoritie; yea, his deare Countrey; and betake himselfe to a forraigne people, there to endure a thousand miseries, that do continually waite upon a voluntary exile. Being thus distracted, and tossed in the restlesse waves of doubt, without guid to trust to, or haven to flye to for succour; on the sudden Gods Spirit alsisting, hee felt a calme, and began to discourse with himselfe in this

this manner :

*Why wandrest thou thus
in uncertainties, unhappy
man ; cast away feare, put
on thy shield, the shield of
faith ; Where is thy wonted
courage, thy goodnesse, thy
constancie ? remember that
Christs glorie lies at the
stake, suffer thou without
feare, and hee will defend
thee, hee will tell thee what
thou shalt answer ; hee can
beat downe all danger, bring
thee out of prison, raise thee
from the dead ; consider Pe-
ter in the dungeon, the Mar-
tyrs in the fire, if thou ma-
kest a good confession, thou
mayest*

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mayest indeed goe to prison, or death, but an eternall reward in heaven remaines for thee; What hast thou in this world comparable to eternall life, to everlasting happinesse? if thou dost otherwise, thinke of the scandall; (common people live by example, thinking what ever is done, is well done) feare the losse of peace and joy, feare hell, death, and eternall wrath; or if thy flesh be so strong, as to cause thee to doubt of the issue, flie thy Countrie; get thee away, though never so far, rather then denie the Lord of Life.

Now

Now was *Spira* in
reasonable quiet, be-
ing resolved to yeeld to
these weightie reasons;
yet holding it wisdome
to examine all things,
hee consults also with
flesh and bloud; thus
the battaile doth re-
new, and the flesh be-
ginnes in this manner:
*Bee well advised, fond
man, consider reasons on
both sides, and then judge:
how canst thou thus o-
verweene thine owne suf-
ficiencie, as thou neither
regardest the examples
of thy Progenitors; nor
the*

A Relation of

the judgment of the whole Church; dost thou not consider what miserie this thy rashnesse will bring thee unto? thou shalt lose thy substance, gotten with so much care and travell, thou shalt undergoe the most exquisite torments that malice it selfe can devise, thou shalt bee counted an heretique of all: and to close up all, thou shalt die shamefully. What thinkest thou of the loathsome stinking dungeon, the bloudie axe, the burning fagot, are they delightfull? Bee wise at length, and keepe thy life and honour,
thou

thou maist live to do much
good to good men, as God
commands thee, thou maist
be an ornament to thy Coun-
trie; and put case thy Coun-
tries losse would bee of small
esteeme with thee; Wilt thou
bring thy friends also into
danger? thou hast begotten
children, wilt thou now cut
their throats, & inhumane-
ly butcher them, which may
in time bring honor to their
Countrie, glorie to God,
helpe and furtherance to his
Church: goe to the Legate
weake man, freely confesse
thy fault, and helpe all these
miseries. Thus did the
cares

cares of this world, and the deceitfullnesse of riches, choke the good Seed that was formerly sowne; so as fearing, hee faints, and yeelds unto the allurements of this present world, & being thus blinded, he goes to the Legate at *Venice*, and salutes him with this news.

Having for these divers yeares entertained an opinion concerning some Articles of faith, contrary to the Orthodox and received judgement of the Church; and uttered many things against the authoritie of the Church

Church of Rome, and the
universall Bishop: I hum-
bly acknowledge my fault
and errour, and my folly in
misleading others: I there-
fore yeeld my selfe in all o-
bedience to the Supreme Bi-
shop, into the bosome of the
Church of Rome; never to
depart again from the Tra-
ditions and Decrees of the
holy See: I am heartily sor-
ry for what is past; and I
humbly begge pardon for so
great an offence.

The Legate perceiving
Spira to faint, he pursues
him to the utmost; hee
causeth a recitation of all

B

his

his Errours to be drawne
in writing, together with
the Confession annexed
to it, and commands Spi-
re to subscribe his name
there, which accordingly
he did; then the Legate
commands him to return
to his owne Towne; and
there to declare this Con-
fession of his, and to ac-
knowledg the whole Do-
ctrine of the Church of
Rome to be holy, and true;
and to abjure the Opini-
ons of Luther, and other
such Teachers, as false,
& hereticall: Man knowes
the beginnings of sinne, but
who

who bounds the issues thereof? Spira having once lost footing, goes downe a maine, he cannot stay, nor gaine say the Legate; but promiseth to accomplish his whole will and pleasure; he soone addresseth himselfe for his Iourney, and being onward in the way, bethinks himselfe of large spoyles hee had brought away from the Conflict with the Legate: what glorious testimony hee had given of his great faith, and constancie in Christs cause: and to be plaine, how im-

piously hee had denyed Christ, and his Gospell at Venice; and what he promised to do further in his owne Country; and thus partly with feare, and partly with shame being confounded; he thought he heard a voyce speaking unto him in this manner.

Spira, *What dost thou heere? whither goest thou? hast thou unhappy man, given thy hand-writing to the Legate at Venice; yet see thou dost not seale it in thine owne Countrey: dost thou indeed thinke eternall life someane, as that thou prefferest*

ferrest this present life before it? dost thou well in preferring wife and children before Christ? is the windie applause of the people, better indeed then the glorie of God; and the possession of this worlds good more deare to thee, then the salvation of thine owne Soule? is the small use of a moment of time more desyreable, then eternall wrath is dreadfull? Thinke with thy selfe what Christ endured for thy sake; is it not equall thou shouldest suffer somewhat for him? Remember, man, that the sufferings of this present life,

B 3

life, are not comparable to the glorie that shall bee revealed: if thou sufferest with him, thou shalt also raigne with him: thou canst not answer for what thou hast alreadie done; nevertheless, the gate of mercie is not quite shut, take heed that thou heapest not sinne upon sinne, lest thou repent when it will be too late.

Now was Spira in a wilderness of doubts, not knowing which way to turne him, nor what to doe, yet being arrived in his owne Countrey, and amongst his friends, with shame

shame enough hee relates
what he had done; and
what he had further pro-
mised to doe; and how
the terrors of God on the
one side, and the terrour
of this world on the o-
ther side, did continually
racke him; and therefore
hee desired of them ad-
vise in this so doubtfull a
case: his friends upon
small deliberation an-
swered; that it was requi-
site hee should take heed
that hee did not in any
wise betray his wife and
children, and all his
friends into danger, see-

ing that by so smal a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might bee done in lesse space then half an houre, he might both free himselfe from present danger, and preserve many that depended upon him; adding moreover, that hee could get no Credit in relenting from that which he had already in greatest part performed before the Legate at *Venice*, and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredit could arise, more then what by the former

former action already he had sustained: on the other side, if hee did not performe his promise made to the Legate, hee could neither discharge himselfe of the shame which he had already incurred; nor avoyd farre more heavy and insupportable injuries, then probably he should have endured, if hee had persisted obstinately in his former Opinions.

This was the last blow of the battaile, and Spira utterly overcome, goes to the *Prætor*, and proffers

to performe his foresaid promise made to the Legate, who in the meane time had taken order to have all things ready, and had sent the instrument of abjuration signed by *Spira*, to the *Prætor*, by the hands of a certaine Priest. All that night the miserable man ware out with restlesse cares, without any minute of rest; the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, he desperately enters into the publique Congregation, where Masse being finished, in the

the presence of friends
and enemies, and of the
whole Assembly; being
by estimation neere two
thousand people; yea,
and of Heaven it selfe, he
recites that infamous ab-
juration, word for word,
as it was written: it be-
ing done, he was fined at
thirtie pieces of gold,
which he presently paid:
five whereof were given
to the Priest that brought
the abjuration, the other
twentie five were im-
ployed towards the ma-
king of a Shryve to put the
Eucharist in; then was
he

he sent home restored to his Dignities; goods, wife, and children: No sooner was hee departed, but he thought hee heard a direfull voyce, saying to him; *thou wicked wretch, thou haste denyed mee, thou hast renounced the covenant of thy obedience, thou hast broken thy vow, hence Apostate, beare with thee the sentence of thy eternall damnation*: hee trembling and quaking in body and mind, fell down in a swoone; reliefe was at hand for the body, but from that time forwards, he never found

any peace or ease of his
minde; but continuing
in unceasing torment he
professed that he was
captived under the re-
venging hand of the great
God: that hee heard con-
tinually that fearefull sen-
tence of Christ that just
Iudge: that hee knew he
was utterly undone: that
he could neither hope for
grace, nor Christs inter-
cessiō wth God the Father
in his behalfe: thus was
his fault ever heavy on his
heart, and ever his Iudge-
ment before his eyes.

Now began his friends
some

some of them to repent too late of their rash counsell; others not looking so high as the Iudgement of God, laid all the blame upon his Melancholicke constitution; that overshadowing his judgment, wrought in him a kinde of madnesse: every one censured as his fancy led him, yet for remedy all agreed in this, to use both the wholesome helpe of Physicians, and the pious advise of Divines, and therefore thought it meet to convey him to *Padua*, an Vniversitie

fitie of note, where plenty
of all manner of meanes
was to be had : this they
accordingly did, both
with his wife, children,
and whole family; others
also of his friends accom-
panying him : and being
arrived at the house of
one *James Ardin*, in Saint
Leonards, Parish, they
sent for three Physicians
of most note, who upon
due observation of the
effects, & of other Symp-
tomes of his disease, and
some private conference
one with another, among
themselves, returned their
verdict

verdict in this manner,
viz. That they could not
discerne that his body
was afflicted with any
danger or distemper ori-
ginally from it selfe, by
reason of the over-ruling
of any humour, but that
this *Maladie* of his did a-
rise from some griefe, or
palsion of his minde,
which being overbur-
thened, did so oppresse
the spirits, as they wan-
ting free passage, stirred
up many ill humours,
whereof the body of man
is full, & these ascending
up into the braine, trou-
bled the fancie, shadowed

the seat of the judgment,
and so corrupted it: this
was the state of his di-
sease, and that outward
part that was visible to
the eye of nature, this they
endeavoured to reforme
by purgation, either to
consume, or at least to di-
vert the course of those
humors from the braine;
but all their skil effected
nothing, which Spira
noting, said: *Alas poore
men, how farre wide are you;
doe you thinke that this di-
sease is to be cured by po-
tions; beleeve mee there
must bee another manner of
medi-*

medicine, it is neither potions, plaisters, nor drugs, that can helpe a fainting Soule cast downe with sense of sinne, and the wrath of God; it is onely Christ that must bee the Physician, and the Gospel the sole Antidote.

The Physicians easily beleevved him, after they had understood the whol truth of the matter, and therfore they wished him to seeke some spirituall comfort. By this time the fame of this man was spred over all *Padua*, and the neighbour Countrey, partly for that he was a
man

man of Esteeme, partly because as the disease, so the occasion was especially remarkeable; for this vvas not done in a corner: so as daily there came multitudes of all sorts to see him: some out of curiositie onely to see and discourse: some out of a pious desire to try all meanes that might reduce him to comfort againe, or at least to benefit themselves, by such a spectacle of misery, and of the justice of God. Amongst these, *Paulus Vergerius* Bishop of *Iustinopolis*, and
Matthew

Mattheu Gribauldus, deserve especially to be named, as the most principall labourers for this mans comfort. They finde him now about fiftie years of age, neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor with the unconstant headstrong passion of youth, but in the strength of his experience and judgment; in a burning heat calling excessively for drinke; yet his understanding active, quicke of apprehension, wittie in discourse above his ordinary manner, and judiciously

judiciously opposite: his friends laboured him by all faire meanes to receive some nourishment, which he obstinately gaine-saying, they forcibly infused some liquid sustenance into his mouth, most of which he spit out againe; exceedingly chafing, and in this fretting mood of his, said: As it is true that *all things worke for the best* Rom. 8. *to those that love God; so to* ^{28.} *the wicked all are contrary: for whereas a plentiful off-spring is the blessing of God, and his reward, being a stay to the weak estate*
of

of their aged parents; to me
they are a cause of bitter-
nesse and vexation; they doe
strive to make mee tire out
this misery; I would faine
be at an end; I deserve not
this dealing at their hands;
O that I were gone from
hence, that some body would
let out this weary Soule.

His friends saluted
him, and asked him, what
hee conceived to be the
cause of his disease; forth-
with he brake out into a
lamentable discourse of
the passages formerly re-
lated, & that with such
passionate Elocution, that
hee

hee caused many to weep
& most to tremble. They
contrarily to comfort
him; propounded many
of Gods promises recor-
ded in the Scripture; and
many examples of Gods
mercy: *My sinne* (said he)
is greater then the mercy of
God. Nay, answered they,
the mercy of God is above
all sin; God would have
all men to be saved: *It is*
true (quoth he) *hee would*
have all that he hath elected,
o bee saved; he would not
have damned reprobates to
be saved; I am one of that
number; I know it, for I
willingly -

willingly, and against my knowledge denied Christ; and I feele that hee hardens, and will not suffer me to hope.

After some silence, one asked him whether hee did not beleeve that Doctrine (to bee true) for which hee was accused before the Legate; hee answered; I did beleeve it when I denied it, but now I neither beleeve that, nor the Doctrine of the Roman Church; I beleeve nothing. I have no faith, no trust, no hope; I am a Reprobate like Cain, or Iudas, who

who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despaire; and my friends doe mee great wrong, that they suffer me not to goe to the place of unbelievers. I justly deserve.

Heere they beganne sharply to rebuke him; requiring, and charging him that in any wise hee did not violate the mercy of God; to which he answered: The mercy of God is exceeding large and extends to all the elect; but not to mee, or any like to mee, who are sealed up to wrath: I tell you I de- Rom. 2.
serve it, my owne conscience 18.

condemnes me; what needeth any other Iudge. Christ came (said they) to take away sinne, and calling for a book, they read unto him the passion of Christ, and comming to his nayling to the Crosse, Spira said: This indeed is comfortable to such as are elected, but as for me wretch, they are nothing but grieve and torment, because I contemned them. Thus roaring for grieve, & tossing himself up & downe upon the bed as he lay, he intreated them to read no more: As Gribanldus was comming
to

to see him, *Vergerius* said
to *Spira*, deare Sir heere is
Doctor *Gribauidus*, a
godly and faithfull friend
of yours, come to see you:
He is welcome (said he)
but hee shall find mee ill:
Gribauidus replyed, Sir,
this is but an illusion of
the divell, who doth what
he can to vexe you; but
turne you to God with
your whole heart, and he
is ready to shew you mer-
cy; the earth you know is
full of his mercy; it is He
that hath said, that as often Ps. 119.
as a sinner repents of his
sinne, hee will remember his

finnes no more. Consider this in the example of *Peter* that was Christs familiar, and an Apostle; and yet denied him thrice with an oath, and yet God was mercifull unto him: consider the theefe that spent his whole life in wickednesse, and for all that, did not God graciously respect him in the last minute of his life? Is the Lords hand now shortned that it cannot save? to this *Spira* answered; “If *Peter* grieved
 “and repented, it was because Christ beheld him
 “with

Luk.^{22.}
 61.

“with a mercifull eye ;
“and in that he was par-
“doned, it was not be-
“cause hee wept, but be-
“cause God was gracious
“to him : but God re-
“spectes not me, and there-
“fore I am a reprobate : I
“feel no comfort can en-
“ter into my heart, there
“is no place there but
“onely for torments and
“vexings of spirit : I tell
“you my case is properly
“mine own, no man ever
“was in the like plight,
“and therefore my estate
“is fearefull.

Then roaring out in

the bitternesse of his spirit, said : *It is a fearefull thing to fall into the hands of the living God : the violence of his passion and action sutable , did amaze many of the beholders ; insomuch as some of them said with a whispering voyce, that he was possessed ; hee over-hearing it, said : Doe you doubt it ? I have a whole Legion of divels that take up their dwellings within mee, and possesse me as their owne ; and justly too, for I have denyed Christ. Whether did you that willingly*
ly

ly or not (said they) *That is nothing to the purpose* (said Spira) *Christ saith, whosoever denies mee before men,* Matt. 10. 33. *him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven: Christ will not bee denied, no not in word; and therefore it is enough, though in heart I never denied him.*

They observing his distemper to arise from the sense and horror of the paines of hell, asked him whether he thought there were worse paines then what he endured for the present; he said, that he knew *there were far worse*
C 4 paines

Psal. 1.

paines then those that bee
then suffered: for the wic-
ked shall rise to their judge-
ment, but they shall not stand
in Iudgement: this I trem-
ble to thinke of: yet doe I
desire nothing more then
that I might come to that
place, where I may bee sure
to feele the worsts and to be
freed from feare of worse to
come.

I but you are to consi-
der (said one) that those
opinions for which you
were accused before the
Legate were impious;
and therefore you are not
to thinke you denied
Christ,

Christ, but rather that you confessed him; acknowledging the infallible truth of the Catholike Church. Truly (said he) *when I did denie those opinions, I did think them to be true, & yet I did deny them.*

Goe to (said others) now then beleeeve that they are not. Now I cannot (said hee) God will not suffer mee to beleeeve them, nor trust in his mercy: What would you have mee doe? I would faine attaine to this power, but cannot, though I should presently be burnt for it. But

why doe you (said the o-
ther) esteeme this so grie-
vous a sinne, when as the
learned Legate constrain-
ed you to it, which hee
surely would not have
done, if your former o-
pinions had not beene
Erroneous : no, good
Francis, the divell besets
thee, let not therefore the
grievousnesse of thy sin,
(if anie such be) amaze
thee. “ You say right (*re-*
“ *plyed he*) the divell hath
“ possesse me, and God
“ hath left me to his pow-
“ er; for I finde I can nei-
“ ther beleewe the Gospel,
“ nor

“nor trust in Gods mer-
“cie; I have sinned a-
“gainst the holy Ghost;
“and God by his im-
“mutable Decree, hath
“bound mee over to per-
“petuall punishment,
“without anie hope of
“pardon; It is true that Rom. 9.
11. and
Rom. 4.
“the greatnesse of sin, or
“the multitude of them,
“cannot bind Gods mer-
“cie: all those manie sins
“that in the former part
“of my life I have com-
“mitted, then did not so
“much trouble mee, for I
“trusted that God would
“not lay them to my
“charge:

"charge: but now ha-
 "ving sinned against the
 "holy Ghost, God hath
 "taken away from me all
 "power of repentance; &
 "now brings all my sins
 Iam. 2. "to remembrance, and
 10. "thus guiltie of one, guiltie
 "of all. And there-
 "fore it is no matter whe-
 "ther my sinnes be great
 "or small, few or many;
 "they are such as Christs
 bloud, nor Gods mercie
 Rom. 9. "belongs to mee: God
 18. "will have mercie on
 "whom hee will have
 "mercie; and whom he
 "will he hardneth; this is
 "it

“But thou gnawest my heart;
“Shee hath hardned mee;
“and I finde that he daily
“more and more doth
“harden mee; and there-
“fore I am out of hope:
“I feele it; and therefore
“I cannot but despaire: I
“tell you, there was never
“such a monster as I am;
“never was man alive a
“spectacle of so excee-
“ding misery: I knew
“that justification is to be
“expected by Christ; and
“I denied, and abjured
“it; to the end I might
“keepe this fraile life
“from adversitie, and
“my

“my children from po-
“vertie; and now be-
“hold, how bitter this
“life is to mee; and God
“only knowes, what
“shall become of this my
“family; but surely no
“good is likely to betide
“it, but rather daily
“worfe and worfe; and
“such a ruin at the length
“as that one stone shall
“not be left on another.

But why should you
(said *Gribawldus*) conceit
so deeply of your sinne,
seeing you cannot but
know that manie have
denied Christ, yet never
fell

fell into despaire? "Well
" (*said hee*) I can see no
" ground of comfort for
" such, neither can I war-
" rant them from Gods
" revēging hand in wrath;
" though it pleaseth God
" yet to suffer such to bee
" in peace: and besides,
" there will a time of
" change come, and then
" they shall be thoroughly
" tryed: and if it were
" not so, yet God is just
" in making mee an Ex-
" ample to others; and I
" cannot justly complain:
" there is no punishment
" so great but I have de-
" served

“served it; for this so
“heinous offence: I as-
“sure you it is no small
“matter to denie Christ;
“and yet it is more ordi-
“nary then commonly
“men doe conceive of:
“it is not a deniall made
“before a Magistrate as it
“is with mee; for as of-
“ten as a Christian doth
“dissemble the knowne
“truth, as often as hee
“approves of false wor-
“ship, by presenting him-
“selfe at it; so often as
“hee doth not things
“worthy of his calling,
“or such things as are un-
“worthy,

“worthy of his calling :
“so often hee denies
“Christ : thus did I, and
“therefore am justly pu-
“nished for it. *(saith)*

Your estate (quoth *Gri-
shandle*) is not so strange
as you make it, *Job* was
so farre gone, that hee
complained God had set
him as a marke against
him : and *David* that was
a man after Gods owne
heart, complained often
that God had forsaken
him, and was become
his enemy ; yet both recei-
ued comfort againe : com-
fort your selfe ; therefore
God

God will come at length,
though hee now seeme
farre off.

“ O Brother (*answered*
“ Spira) I beleeve all this;
“ the diuels beleeve and
“ tremble; but *David* was
“ ever elected and deare-
“ ly beloved of God; and
“ though he fell, yet God
“ tooke not utterly away
“ his holy Spirit; and
“ therefore was heard
“ when he prayed, *Lord*
“ *take not thy holy Spirit*
“ *from mee*: but I am in
“ another case, being ever
“ accursed from the pre-
“ sence of God: neither
“ can

“ can I pray as he did, be-
“ cause his holy Spirit is
“ quite gone, and cannot
“ be recalled; & therefore
“ I know I shall live in
“ continuall hardnesse so
“ long as I live : O that I
“ might feele but the least
“ sense of the love of God
“ to mee, though but for
“ one small moment, as I
“ now feele his heavie
“ wrath that burnes like
“ the torments of hell
“ within mee, and afflicts
“ my Conscience with
“ pangs unutterable ; ve-
“ rily desperation is hell it
“ selfe.

Heere

Heere Gribauldus said,
I doe verily beleeeve, *Spira*,
that God having so se-
verely chastised you in
this life, correcteth you in
mercie heere, that he may
spare you hereafter, and
that he hath mercies sea-
led up for you in time to
to come.

Nay (said *Spira*) hence
doe I know that I am a re-
probate, because he afflicteth
mee with hardnesse of heart:
Oh that my body had suffered
all my life long, so that hee
would bee pleased to release
my soules, and ease my Consci-
ence, this burthened Consci-
ence.

Gri-

Gribauldus being desirous to ease his minde from the continuall meditation of his sinne; as also to sound how for the present he stood affected to the Romish Church; asked him what hee thought became of the soules of men so soone as they departed out of the bodie, to which hee answered.

Although this bee not so fully revealed in Scripture; yet I verily beleeye that the soules of the Elect goe presently to the Kingdome of glory; and not that sleep with the

the bodie as some doe imagine.

1 Sam. 2.
6.

Verie well; said one of the Spectators, why doe the Scriptures then say, that God brings downe to hell, and raiseth up; seeing it cannot be meant of the estate of the soule after death, which as thou sayest, either goeth to heaven without change, or to hell without redemption: it must be understood of the estate of the soule in this life; like that wherein thou art at this present: and oftentimes wee see that God suffers

suffers men to fall into the
jauves of despaire, and yet
raiseth them up again, and
therefore despaire not, but
hope; it shall bee even
thus with thee in his good
time.

*This is the worke, (quoth
Spira) this the labour; for
I tell you, when I at Venice
did first abjure my professi-
on, and so, as it were, drew
an Indenture, the Spirit of
God often admonish'd mee;
and when at Cittadella; I
did, as it were, set to my
seale; the Spirit of God of-
ten suggested to mee; Doe
not write Spira, do not seale;
yet*

yet I resisted the Holy
 Ghost; and did both; and at
 that very present I did evi-
 dently feele a wound infli-
 cted in my very will; so al-
 though I can say I would be-
 leeve; yet can I not say I
 will beleeve; God hath de-
 nied mee the power of will;
 and it befalls mee in this my
 miserable estate; as with one
 that is fast in irons; and his
 friends comming to see him
 doe pitty his estate; and doe
 perswade him to shake off his
 fetters; and to come out of
 his bonds; which God knows
 hee would faine doe; but
 cannot; this is my very case;

you

*you perswade me to beleeeve:
how faine would I doe it, but
cannot? O now I cannot.
Then violently grasping
his hands together, and
raising himselfe up: Be-
hold (said he) I am strong,
yet by little and little I decay
and consume, and my ser-
vants would faine preserve
this weary life; but at length
the will of God must be done,
and I shall perish miserably
as I deserve: rejoyce yee
righteous in the Lord; bles-
sed are you whose hearts the* Psal. 32.
Lord hath mollified.

Then after some pause;
It is wonderfull, I earnestly

D desire

desire to pray to God with my heart, yet I cannot; I see my damnation, and I know my remedy is onlie in Christ, yet I cannot set my selfe to laie hold on it; such are the punishments of the damned; they confesse what I confesse, they repent of their losse of heaven, they envie the Elect, yet their repentance doth them no good, for they cannot mend their waies.

As he was thus speaking, hee observed divers flies that came about him, and some lighted on him: Behold (said hee) now also

also * *Belzebub* comes to
his banquet, you shall shortly
see my end, and in mee an
example to manie of the ju-
stice & judgement of God.

* Signi-
fies the
god of
flies.

About this time came
in two Bishops with di-
vers Schollers of the
Vniversitv, one of them
being *Paulus Vergerius*,
having observed *Spira*
more then any other, bee-
ing continually conver-
fant with him, told him
his estate was such, as ra-
ther stood in need of Pray-
er then advice; and there-
fore desired him to pray
with him in the Lords

D 2 Prayer;

Prayer; *Spira* consented, and he began:

Our Father which art in heaven,) then breaking forth into teares, he stopped; but they said, it is well, your griefe is a good signe: "I bewaile (said "he) my miserie, for I "perceive I am forsaken "of God, and cannot call "to him from my heart, as I was wont to doe; yet let us goe on, said *Vergorius*.

Thy Kingdome come;) "O Lord (said *Spira*) "bring mee also into this "Kingdome; I beseech "thee

“thee shut mee not out.
Then comming to those
words; *Give us this day
our daily bread*; he added;
“O Lord, I have enough
“and abundance to feed
“this carkeise of mine;
“but there is another
“bread, I humbly begge
“the bread of thy grace;
“without which, I know
“I am but a dead man.

*Leade us not into temp-
tation*;) “seeing Lord
“that I am brought into
“temptation, helpe mee
“Lord that I may escape;
“the enimie hath over-
“come; helpe mee, I be-
D ; “seech

“ seech thee, to overcome
“ this cruell Tyrant.

These things hee spake
with a mournfull voyce,
the teares trickling down
abundantly ; and expres-
sing such affection and
passion , as turned the
bowels of those there
present , with grieve and
compunction ; they then
turning to *Spira* , said :
You know that none can
call *Christ Iesus the Lord*,
but by the Holie Ghost :
you must therefore think
of your selfe according to
that soft affection, which
you expresse in your
prayers,

prayers, inferring thereby that God hath not wholly cast you off; or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

I perceive (said Spira) that I call on him to my eternall damnation; for I tell you againe, it is a new and unheard of example that you finde in me: If Iudas (said they) had but outlived his dayes, which by nature hee might have done; hee might have repented, and Christ would have received him to mercie; and yet hee sinned most grievously against

against his Master, which
did so esteeme of him, as
to honour him with the
dignitie of an *Apostle*, and
did maintaine and feed
him : Hee answered,
“ Christ did also feed and
“ honour mee, neither yet
“ is my fault one jot lesse
“ then that of his; be-
“ cause it is not more ho-
“ nour to bee personally
“ present with *Christ* in
“ the flesh, then to bee in
“ his presence now by il-
“ lumination of his holy
“ Spirit : and besides, I
“ denie that ever *Indas*
“ could have repented,
how

“how long soever he had
“lived; for grace was
“quite taken from him,
“as it is now from mee.

O *Spira* (said they) you
know you are in a spiri-
tuall desertion; you must
therfore not beleeeve what
Satan suggests; hee was
ever a lyar from the be-
ginning, and a meere Im-
postour, and will cast a
thousand lying fancies in-
to your minde, to beguile
you withall; you must ra-
ther beleeeve those whom
you judge to be in a good
estate, and more able to
discerne of you then your
D. 5 selfe;

selfe ; beleeve us, and wee tell you, that God will be mercifull unto you.

O here is the knot (said Spira) I would I could beleeve ; But I cannot.

Then he began to reckon up what fearefull dreames and visions, hee was continually troubled withall ; that hee saw the divels come flocking into his Chamber, and about his bed, terrifying him with strange noises ; that these were not fancies, but that hee saw them, as really as the standers by ; and that
besides

besides these outward
terroures, hee felt continu-
ally, a racking torture of
his minde, and a continu-
all butchery of his consci-
ence, being the very pro-
per pangs of the damned
wights in hell.

Cast these fancies (saide
Gribauldus) these are but
illusions, humble your
selfe in the presence of
God, and praise him.

"The dead praise not Psalm 6. 5.
"the Lord (answered he)
"nor they that goe down
"into the pit: wee that
"are drowned in de-
"spaire, are dead and
"are

“are already gone downe
“into the pit: what hell
“can there be worse then
“desperation; or what
“greater punishment? the
“gnawing *worme*, un-
“quenchable fire, hor-
“rour, confusion, and
“(which is worse then
“all) desperation it selfe
“continually tortures me;
“and now I count my
“present estate worse
“then if my soule (sepa-
“rated from my body)
“were with *Judas* and
“the rest of the damned;
“and therefore, I now
“desire rather to be there,
“then

“then thus to live in the
“body.

One being present, repeated certaine words out of the *Psalmes*: If thy Psalm. 89. children forsake my law ^{30.} and walk not in my judgments; I will visite their transgressions with rods, and their iniquities with stripes; neverthelesse my loving kindnesse I will not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulnessse to faile: Marke this, O *Spira*, my Covenant I will not breake.

These promises (said Spira) belong onely to the elect,

elect, which if tempted, may fall into sin, but are againe lifted up and recovered out: as the Prophet saith, though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast downe, for the Lord upholdeth him: Therefore Peter could rise, for he was Elected, but the reprobate when they fall cannot rise againe, as appeares in Cain, Saule, and Iudas: God deales one way with the Elect, and another way with Reprobates.

The next day hee prayed with them in the Latine tongue, and that with excellent affection, as outwardly

wardly appeared, blessed
 bee God (said *Kergerius*)
 these are no signes of e-
 ternall reprobation: you
 must not O *Spira*, seeke
 out the secret counsels of
 Gods election and re-
 probation, for no man
 can know so long as hee
 lives, whether by his
 good or bad deeds, hee
 bee worthy of Gods love
 or anger: doe you not
 know that the Prophet ^{Ecclef. 9.}
David complained, that ^{1. Psal. 88.}
 God had cast off his
 Soule. ^{14.}

I know all this (quoth
Spira) I know the mercies
 of

of God are infinite, and doe
surpasse the finnes of the
whole world, and that they
are effectnall to all that be-
leeve, but this faith, and this
hope, is the gift of God; O
that hee would give it mee;
but it is as impossible as to
drinke up the Sea at a
draught: as for that of So-
lomon, if hee had ever tri-
ed that which I feele by woe-
full experience; hee would
never have spoken as he did;
but the truth is, never had
mortall man, such an evi-
dent experience of Gods an-
ger and hatred against him,
as I have; you that are in a
good

good estate, thinke repentance and faith to be workes of great facilitie, and therefore you thinke it an easie matter to perswade a man to beleeve; the whole need not the Physician; and bee that is well, can soone give counsell to such as are ill; but this is the hell to mee, my heart is hardened, I cannot beleeve; many are called, but few are chosen.

Vpon what grounds (said they) doe you conceive so ill an opinion of your selfe?

"I once did know God
"to bee my Father, not
onely

“onely by creation ; but
“by regeneration, I knew
“him by his beloved
“Sonne, the authour and
“finisher of our Salvati-
“on; I could pray to him,
“and hope for pardon of
“sinnes from him ; I had
“a taste of his sweet-
“nesse, peace , and com-
“fort : now contrarily,
“I know God not as a
“Father but as an enemy;
“what more? my heart
“hates God, and seekes to
“get above him : I have
“nothing else to flie to
“but terrour & despaire.
“Belike you thinke then
(said

(said they) that those
who have the earnest and
first fruits of Gods Spirit,
may notwithstanding fall
away?

“The judgements of
“God are a deepe abisse,
“*(said he)* wee are soone
“drowned if we enter in-
“to them; he that thinks
“he standeth, let him take
“heed lest hee fall: as for
“my selfe, I know I am
“falne backe; and that
“I once did know the
“truth; though it may
“be not so thoroughly: I
“know not what else to
“say, but that I am one of
“that

“ that number , which
 “ God hath threatned to
 “ teare in pieces.

Say not so (answered
 they) for God may come,
 though at the last houre;
 keepe hold therefore , at
 the least by hope.

“ This (*quoth he*) is my
 “ case I tell you I cannot,
 “ God hath deprived mee
 “ of hope; this brings ter-
 “ ror to my minde , and
 “ pines this hodie which
 “ now is so weake , as it
 “ cannot performe the se-
 “ verall offices thereof:
 “ for as the Elect have the
 “ Spirit testifying that
 “ they

“they are the sonnes of
“God, so the Reprobates
“even while they live, do
“often feele a worme in
“their conscience, where-
“by they are condemned
“already, and therefore
“as soone as I perceived
“this wound inflicted on
“my minde and will; I
“I knew that I wanted
“the gifts of saving grace,
“and that I was utterly
“undone; God chasteneth
“his children with tem-<sup>1 Cor.
11.33.</sup>
“porarie afflictions, that <sup>Rom. 1.
28.</sup>
“they may come as gold
“out of the fire; but pu-
“nisheth the wicked
“with

“with blindnesse in their
“understandings, & hard-
“nesse of heart; and woe
“be to such, from whom
“God takes his holie Spi-
“rit.

Here one rebuked him,
and told him, he gave too
much credit to sence, that
hee was not to beleeve
himselfe; but rather him
that was in a good estate;
and I testifie to you (said
he) that God will be mer-
cifull to you.

Nay (answered he) for
because I am in this ill e-
state; therefore can I beleeve
nothing but what is contrarie

to

to my salvation and comfort;
but you that are so confident
of your good state, looke that
it bee true, for it is no such
small matter to be assured of
sinceritie: a man had need
bee exceeding stronglie
grounded in the Truth, be-
fore hee can bee able to af-
firme such a matter as you
now doe; it is not the per-
formance of a few outward
duties; but a mightie con-
stant labour, with all inten-
tion of heart and affection;
with full desire and endea-
vour, continually to set forth
Gods glorie; there must bee
neither feare of Legates,
Inqui-

*Inquisitors, Prisons, nor
 anie death whatsoever; ma-
 nie thinke themselves hap-
 pie that are not; it is not e-
 very one that saith, Lord,
 Lord; that shall goe to
 heaven.*

They came another day
 and found him with his
 eyes shut, as if hee had
 beene drowzie, and verie
 loath to discourse; at
 which time there came in
 also a grave man from
Cittadella; who deman-
 ded of *Spira*, if hee knew
 him, or not; he lifting up
 his eye-lids and not sud-
 denly remembring him,
 the

Matth. 7.
 22.

the man said to him; I
am Presbiter *Antonie*
Fontanina; I was with
you at Venice, some 8.
weeks since: "O cur-
"sed day (sayd *Spira*) O
"curfed day: O that I
"had never gone thi-
"ther, would God I
"had then died.

Afterwards came in a
Priest called *Bernardi-*
nus Sardoneus: bringing
with him a booke of
Exorcismes, to conjure
this divell: whom when
Spira saw, shaking his
head he said:

"I am verily perswa-
E "ded

“ded indeed, that God
“hath left mee to the
“power of the divells:
“but such they are, as
“are not to be found in
“your Letanie: neither
“will they be cast out by
spels: The Priest pro-
ceeding in his intended
purpose, with a strange
uncouth gesture, and a
loud voice, adjured the
Spirit to come into *Spi-
ra's* tongue, and to an-
swer: *Spira* deriding his
fruitlesse labour, with a
sigh turned from him.
A Bishop being there
present, said to *Spira*,
brother

brother God hath put
vertue into the Word
and Sacraments : and
wee have used the one
means, and find not that
effect which we desire :
shall we trie the efficacie
of the Sacraments, surely
if you take it as a true
Christian ought to re-
ceive, the body and
bloud of Christ, it will
proove a soveraigne me-
dicine for your sicke
soule.

“ This I cannot do
“ (answered hee) for
“ they that have no right
“ to the promises, have

1 Cor.
11.29.

“no right to the scales :
 “the Eucharist was ap-
 “pointed onely for be-
 “leevers : if wee have
 “not faith, we eate and
 “drinke judgement to
 “our selves : I received
 “it about a moneth
 “since, but I did not
 “well in so doing, for
 “I tooke it by con-
 “straint, and so I tooke
 “it to my deeper con-
 “demnation.

Here *Vergerius* began
 to importune him ear-
 nestly to beware, that
 he did not wilfully resist
 grace, & put himself out
 of

of heaven : charging him
vehemently, by all the
love that was betweene
them: by the love which
hee bare to his chil-
dren, yea to his owne
soule : that he would set
himselſe ſeriously, to re-
turne to that faith and
hope, which once hee
had in the death of
Chriſt, with many ſuch
like words : *Spira* ha-
ving heard much of the
like matter formerlie :
& being ſomewhat mo-
ved, ſaid, “ You do but
“ repeat *Vergerius*, what
“ ſhould I hope ? why
E ; “ ſhould

“Should I beleeve? God
“hath taken faith from
“mee: shew mee then
“whither I shall goe:
“shew mee a haven
“whereto I shall retire:
“you tell mee of Gods
“mercy, when as God
“hath cast mee off: you
“tell mee of Christs in-
“tercession, I have de-
“nied him: you com-
“mand mee to beleeve,
“I say I cannot: you
“bring mee no com-
“fort: your command
“is as impossible for
“me to obey, as to keep
“the Morall Law: if
“you

“you should perswade
“one to love God, with
“all his heart, soule and
“strength; and God
“gives him not the
“power, can he per-
“forme your desire?
“doth not the church
“teach us to sing, direct
“us, O Lord, to love thy
“commandements: hy-
“pocrites say that they
“love God with all
“their heart, but they
“lye: for my part, I will
“not lye, but tell you
“plainely; such is my
“case, that though you
“should never so much

E 4. “im-

“much importune mee
“to hope or beleeve,
“though I desire it, yet
“I cannot: for God (as
“a punishment of my
“wickednesse) hath ta-
“ken away from me all
“his saving graces;
“faith, hope, and all:
“I am not the man
“therefore that you take
“mee for: belike you
“thinke I delight in
“this estate; if I could
“conceive but the least
“sparke of hope of a
“better estate hereaf-
“ter, I would not re-
“fuse to endure the
“most

“most heavie weight
“of the wrath of that
“great God ; yea, for
“twenty thousand years,
“so that I might at
“length attaine to the
“end of that misery,
“which I now know
“will bee eternall ; but
“I tell you, my will
“is wounded : who
“longs more to be-
“leeve then I doe ? but
“all the ground-worke
“of my hope is quite
“gone ; for if the te-
“stimonies of holy
“Scripture bee true (as
“they are most certainly
E 5 “true)

“true) is not this as
“true: whosoever de-
“nies mee before men,
“him (*saith Christ*) will
“I denie before my Fa-
“ther which is in hea-
“ven? is not this proper-
“ly my case, as if it had
“purposely beene in-
“tended against this ve-
“ry person of mine? &
“I pray you, what shall
“become of such as
“Christ denieth; seeing
“there is no other
“Name under heaven,
“whereby you looke to
“bee saved? what saith
“Saint *Paul* to the
“*Hebrewes*?

“*Hebrewes*? It is im- Heb. 6.
“possible for those who
“were once enlightened,
“and have tasted of the
“heavenly gift, & were
“made partakers of the
“Holie Ghost, if they
“fall away, to be renu-
“ed to repentance: what
“can be more plaine a-
“gainst me? Is not that
“Scripture also; if wee
“sinne wilfully after and 10.
26.
“wee have received the
“Knowledge of the
“truth, there remaineth
“no more sacrifice for
“sinne; but a certaine
“looking for of judge-
ment:

ment: the Scripture
speakes of mee, Saint
Paul means me, S.
1 Pet. 3. 21. Peter tels me, it had
been better I had not
knowne the way of
Righteousnesse, then
after I have knowne,
to turne from the holy
commandement: if it
had beene better I had
not known, and yet
then my condemna-
tion had beene most
certaine: doe you not
see evidently, that I
have wilfully denied
the known truth;
may justly expect not
onely

“onely damnation, but
“worfe, if worfe may
“be imagined: God
“will have mee under-
“goe the just punish-
“ment of my sinne, and
“make mee an example
“of his wrath for your
“sakes.

The company pre-
sent, admired his dis-
course, so grievously ac-
cusing himselfe of his
fore-past life; so gravely
and wisely dilating, con-
cerning the judgements
of God, that they then
were convinced, that
it was not frenzie or
madnesse,

madnesses that had possessed him : and being as it were , in admiration of his estate , Spira proceeded againe in this manner , Take heed to your selves , it is no light or easie matter to bee a Christian ; it is not baptisme , or reading of the Scriptures , or boasting of faith in Christ (though even these are good) that can proove one to be an absolute Christian : you know what I said before , there must be a conformity in life ; a Christian must bee strong , unconquerable ,

not

not carrying an obscure
profession, but resolute;
expressing the image of
Christ, and holding out
against all opposition to
the last breath: hee must
give all diligence by righ-
teousnesse, and holinesse, to
make his calling and ele-
ction sure; many there are
that snatch at the promises
in the Gospel, as if they
undoubtedly did belong to
them, and yet they remaine
sluggish, and carelesse,
and beeing flattered by
the things of this present
world, they passe in their
course in quietnesse and
secu-

*securitie, as if they were the
onely happie men; whom
neverthelesse the Lord in
his providence hath ordai-
ned to eternall wrath; as
you may see in S. Lukes*

*Luk. 16. rich man, thus it was with
mee, therefore take heed.*

Then came one of his
Nephews and offered
him some sustenance,
which he disdainfully
refusing, so moved the
youngmans choler, that
hee charged him with
hypocrisie and dissimu-
lation, or frenzie; to
whom *Spira* gravely an-
swering, said:

You

You may interpret the matter as you will; but I am sure, I am not only the Actor, but the argument, and matter of the Tragedy; I would it were frenzie, either fained or true; for if it were fained, I could put it off at pleasure; if it were a reall frenzy, yet there were some hope left of Gods mercie, whereas now there is none; for I know that God hath pronounced mee an enemy, and guiltie of high Treason against his Majestie; I am a cast-away, a vassaille of wrath: yet dare
you

you call it dissembling and
frenzie; and can mocke
at the formidable exam-
ple of the heauie wrath of
God, that should teach you
feare and terrour; but it
is naturall to the flesh, ei-
ther out of malice or igno-
rance, to speake perversly
of the workes of God, the
naturall man discerneth
not of the things that are
of God, because they are
spiritually discerned.

How can this be (saied
Gribauldus) that you can
thus excellently dis-
course of the judge-
ments of God, and of
the

the graces of his holie Spirit, that you finde the want of them, and earnestly desire them; and yet you thinke you are utterly deprived of them.

Take this for certaine (said hee) I want the maine grace of all, and that which is absolutely necessarie; and God doth many times extort most true and strange testimonies of his Majesties justice and mercie; yea out of the mouthes of verie reprobates, for even Iudas, after hee had betrayed his Master,

Mat. 27.

4.

Master, was constrained to confesse his sinne, and to justifie the innocencie of Christ; and therefore if I doe the like, it is no new or strange matter: God hath taken faith from mee, and left mee other common gifts, for my deeper condemnation; by how much the more I remember what I had, and heare others discourse of what they have, by so much the more is my torment, in that I know what I want, and how there is no way to bee relieved.

Thus spake hee, the
teares

teares all the while
trickling downe; pro-
fessing that his pangs
were such, as that the
damned wights in hell
endure not the like mi-
serie; that his estate was
worse, then that of Cain
or Iudas; and therefore
hee desired to die: yet
behold (saith hee) the
Scriptures are accomplish- Rey. 9. 6.
ed in mee; they shall desire
to die, and death shall flie
from them; and verily,
hee seemed exceedingly
to feare, lest his life
should bee drawne out
to a longer thread: and
finding

finding no ease, or rest;
 ever and anon cried
 out: O miserable wretch;
 O miserable wretch; then
 turning to the Com-
 pany, hee besought
 them in this manner.
 O Brethren, take a di-
 ligent heed to your life;
 make more account of the
 gifts of Gods spirit then I
 have done, learne to be-
 ware my misery, thinke not
 you are assured Christians,
 because you understand
 something of the Gospel;
 take heed you grow not
 secure on that ground; be
 constant and immoveable
 in

in the maintaining of your
 profession, confesse even
 untill death if you be called
 thereto: he that loveth
 father, mother, brothers, Luk. 14.
 sisters, sons, daughters, 26.
 kindred, houses, lands,
 more then Christ, is not
 worthie of him.

These words (said
 they) doe not sound like
 the words of a wicked
 Reprobate.

I doe but herein imi-
 tate (said Spira) the rich
 Glutton in the Gospel, who
 though in hell; yet was
 carefull that his brethren
 should not come to that
 place

place of torment : and I
say to you Brethren, take
heed of this miserable e-
state wherein I am.

Then turning him-
selfe to certaine young
men that were present,
hee desired them to con-
ceive him aright: " I
" doe not speak this, to
" derogate from the cer-
" taintie of saving faith,
" and the promises of
" the Gospel, for they
" are most sure; but
" take heed of relying
" on that Faith that
" works not a holy and
" unblameable life, wor-
thy

"thy of a believer;
 "credit mee, & it will
 "faile, I have tried it:
 "I presumed I had got-
 "ten the right faith, I
 "preached it to others,
 "I had all places of
 "Scripture in memorie,
 "that might support it:
 "I thought my selfe
 "sure, and in the meane
 "time, living impious-
 "ly, and carelesly to be-
 "hold, in Gods iudge-
 "ments of God have o-
 "vertaken mee, & not to
 "contradiction, but to con-
 "demnation; and now
 "you would have mee
 "F "to

"to beleeves, but it will
 "not bee; for I feele
 "too late; that good
 "things belong onely
 "to such as are good;
 "whose finnes are co-
 "vered with Christs
 "death and bloud, as
 "with a waile, and
 "guarded with his righ-
 "teous merits from the
 "flood of Gods wrath,
 "even as with a mightie
 "wall; lest miserable
 "mortals should bee
 "swallowed up with
 "the greatnesse of their
 "finnes: But as for
 "mee, I have as it were
 "wil-

“wilfully with mine
“hands pulled downe
“this rampire; behind
“which I might have
“rested in safetie; and
“now are the swelling
“waters come even to
“my soule: and I am
“cast away.

One of his familiar
friends chanced to say,
that certainly he was o-
vercome with melan-
choly; which being o-
verheard, *Spira* answe-
red:

“Well, bee it so, see-
“ing you will needs
“have it so; for thus

F 2 “also

“also is Gods wrath
“manifested against me
“in that hee hath taken
“from mee the use of
“mine understanding
“and reason, so as I
“can neither rightly e-
“steeme and judge of
“my distemper, nor
“hope of remedie: you
“see Brethren, what a
“dangerous thing it is,
“to stoppe or stay in
“things that concerne
“Gods glorie: especi-
“ally to dissemble upon
“anie termes: what a
“fearefull thing is it to
“be neare, and almost a
“Chri-

“ Christian ; never was
“ the like example to
“ this of mine : and
“ therefore if you bee
“ wise , you will seri-
“ ously consider therof ;
“ Oh that God would
“ let loose his hand from
“ me ; that it were with
“ me now , as in times
“ past ; I would scorn the
“ threats of the most
“ cruell Tyrants , beare
“ torments with invin-
“ cible resolution , and
“ glorie in the outward
“ profession of Christ ,
“ till I were choked in
“ the flame , and my

“body consumed to ashes.

You say you are desperate, O *Spira* (said they) why then doe you not strive with some weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as desperate men use to doe? Let mee have a sword (sayd *Spira*) why what would you doe with it (quoth they) *I cannot tell you* (said hee) *what this minde would move me to upon occasion; nor what I would doe.*

They perceiving smal
effect

effect of all this their labour; but rather that he grew worse: for the avoiding of concourse of people; for everie day seldome fewer then 20. continued with him, & to stop the course of fame, which was continually blowne abroad of him; they consult to carry him backe againe into his owne countrey: and those his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leaves of him: *Vergerius* among the rest, required that at their
F 4 parting

parting they might pray
together with him : *Spi-*
ra hardly : consented ;
and as unwillingly per-
formed : for hee said ;
“ My heart is estranged
“ from God ; I cannot
“ call him Father from
“ my heart ; all good
“ motions are now quite
“ gone ; my heart is full
“ of malediction, ha-
“ tred, and blasphemy
“ against God ; I finde I
“ grow more and more
“ hardened in heart, and
“ cannot stoope nor
“ helpe my selfe ; your
“ prayers for mee shall
turne

“turne to your owne
“benefit, they can doe
“mee no good.

Vergerius came to
take his leave of him,
whom *Spira* embracing,
said, “Although I know
“that nothing can bring
“any benefit to mee a
“Reprobate; but that
“every thing shall tend
“to my deeper condem-
“nation; yet I give you
“most hearty thankes,
“for your kinde office
“of love and good will;
“and the Lord returne
“it unto you with a
“F 5 “plen-

“plentifull increase of
“all good.

The next day being brought downe to his intended Iourney, by the way looking round about him with a ghastly looke, he saw a knife lying on a Table, to which he running hastily snatched hold of ; as intending to mischief himselfe; but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in his purpose: whereupon with indignation, hee said, “I would I were, above
“God

“God, for I know hee
“will have no mercy
“on me.

Thus went he home-
wards, often saying,
that the envied the con-
dition of *Cain* and *Iudas*;
hee lay about 8. weekes
in this case, in a continu-
all burning, neither de-
siring, nor receiving a-
ny thing but by force,
and that without dis-
gestion: so spent, that
hee appeared a perfect
Anatomie; expressing
to the view, nothing
but sinewes and bones;
vehement-

vehemently raging for
drinke; ever pining, yet
fearefull to live long;
dreadfull of hell, yet co-
veting death; in a con-
tinuall torment, yet his
own tormentour: and
thus consuming him-
selfe with grieve and
horror, impatience, &
despaire; like a living
man in Hell; hee repre-
sented an extraordinary
example of the justice
and power of God: and
thus (as farre as appea-
reth) within a few dayes
after his arrivall at his
owne

owne home, he departed this present life. Yet an occasion to make us remember, *that secret things belong unto the Lord our God*; but charitie to man, to teach him to hope all things.

Ex-

Extraordinary exam-
ples of Divine Iu-
stice, God never inten-
ded for a nine dayes
wonder : else would hee
when hee exempli'd
Lots wife have turned
her into a statue of melt-
ing snow, not of lasting
salt; which stood as
Iosephus tells us, till his
age, after the destruction
of Ierusalem : and as
some Travellers report,
till at this day : *ut quod-*
dam

*dam hominibus præstaret
condimentum quo sapiant
unde illud caveatur ex-
emplum; Aug. de. civit.
Dei. lib. 16. c. 30. for a
season against corrup-
tion, a preservative a-
gainst Apostacie. This
Tragedy, when fresh
and new, was the con-
version and confirma-
tion of sundry Worth-
ies: *Vergerius* a daily
spectator thereof, forsak-
ing a rich Bishopricke
of *Iustinopolis*, and tents
of Antichrist; went
to *Basil*, and dyed a
worthy*

worthy Protestant: many Nations had Eyewitnesses of their owne Students, then in the Vniversitie of *Padua* who penned the Story, the Copies wherof are frequently revived: our English ones were very defective, and now worne out of shoppes and hands, sundry manuscripts of this abroad imperfect; which moved mee to compare this labour of a worthy Gentleman (who faithfully translated it out of *Italian*,

Italian, French, and Dutch Letters) with the *Latine* of *Colius Secundus*, *Curios*, *Matthews Gribaudus*, professors of the *Civill Law* in *Padua*: *Sigismund Gelow* a *Transilvanian*, *Henricus Scotus*, all daily visitors of *Spira*, and finde it accord with them. Touching *Spiraes* person, I finde (most learned writers) to incline to the right, and hopefull hand: moved by his sweet, humble, and charitable speeches: some few desperate ones excepted,

cepted, that fell from him in some little agonies, which kept him fasting and watching about six moneths space, eating nothing but what was forced downe his throat. The sum of *Calvins* and *Borrhaws* their their counsels (who writ largely of the use of this pattern) is that all learne to take heed of backe-sliding, which Gods soule abhorres; and not to dally with Conscience, and hell on earth, if justly incensed; more to be feared then

then the Spanish Inquisition, or all the Strap-padoes and torments in the world; and to take heed of *Spira's* principall Errors; which were to dispute with Satan over busily in time of weakenesse: especially to reason, and conclude from present sense: to Gods past Reprobation, and future Damnation: both which is hard, if possible for any man to determine in his owne, much more in others cases: so commending thee

theeto his grace who is
able to establish thee to
the end: I bid thee fare-
well, and hope well,
while the space of Grace
lasteth, *Dum spiras spe-
ra*: so mayest thou take
good and no hurt, by
the reading of this terri-
ble example.

FINIS.

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